

Basing Decisions on Common Sense!

At a time when so many are losing faith in government and how decisions are made, Clean Water Action is working to ensure our state lawmakers use common sense to serve the people of California. Take PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) for example. A comparison of the benefits versus downsides of these chemicals clearly shows that they shouldn't be used in common household products such as cookware, dental floss, cleaners, children's products, ski-wax, and food packaging.

BENEFITS:

- PFAS-containing materials are slippery and repel water.

DOWNSIDES:

- PFAS are highly toxic to humans.
- PFAS pollute water, air, and soil .
- PFAS move easily around the globe.
- PFAS contaminates water sources of millions of Californians.

Water treatment and health costs from PFAS exposure are expected to be in the billions.

The good news is that alternatives for PFAS in the products listed above are already available. These alternatives work, and they don't cost more. That's why several other states have already banned PFAS-containing products.

Unbelievably, cookware manufacturers are working hard in the Assembly to "kill" SB 682 (Allen) which would ban PFAS in these common products — even though those companies also make the alternatives, like ceramic non-stick pots and pans. We need to tell our representatives that it's simple common sense to protect our health, environment, and pocketbooks while still enjoying great products. That's why they need to vote "aye" for SB 682.

TAKE ACTION!

PFAS are toxic and are costing ratepayers billions in environmental cleanup. Yet, even though they are easily replaceable in many common products, manufacturers continue to use PFAS. That's why we're asking you to [send a message to your Assemblymember](#) to support SB 682 (Allen), which will ban PFAS in cookware, dental floss, cleaners, children's products, ski-wax, and non-paper-based food packaging.



▲ *Alternatives to PFAS-containing cookware are readily available.*

Empowering Communities to Reduce Local Emissions

The San Joaquin Valley remains the only region in the United States that still has not met the 1997 air quality standards for PM 2.5, which is very fine particulate matter (PM) that poses significant health risks, often produced from burning fossil fuels. Bakersfield, the largest city in Kern County, continues its streak in the top 3 of most polluted cities in the United States, according to the State of the Air Report released annually by the American Lung Association. Despite this, the Kern County Board of Supervisors last month passed its 3rd iteration of an Oil and Gas Ordinance to streamline permitting of new oil and gas facilities. The first 2 ordinances were voided by the courts because they failed to identify and address community impacts. This ordinance continues to fast track Oil and Gas permitting at the expense of the health and safety of Kern County residents, who already face a medley of health issues associated with the County's poor air quality and management.

Tired of leaving air quality in the hands of polluters, local community leaders have taken the reins of emission reduction, accessing Community Air Grants (CAG) from the California Air Resources Board to develop local plans to protect their families and communities from neighboring polluters. These plans, called Local Community Emission Reduction Plans (LCERPs) allow communities to develop emission reduction measures tailored for their communities and gives impacted communities control over the air quality in their area.

Early LCERPs were developed in the Kern County communities of Shafter and Lamont/Arvin, with the Valley Air Board leading the planning process and staffing a local Community Steering Committee that weighed in on plan elements. Measures were developed using a variety of strategies to improve local community air quality, including school bus electrification, vegetative barriers, car replacement programs, walkway development, and pesticide monitoring.

The pioneering work of these communities has created the path that now guides Lost Hills leaders. Lost Hills is a low-income, farm-working community of approximately 2000 residents on the west side of Kern County, and they're using past and current monitoring results to inform their own emission reduction efforts. This includes data from the Study of Neighborhood Air Near Petroleum Sources (SNAPS) that showed Acrolein, a newly identified carcinogen, at 2-3 times the level of neighboring cities. By identifying types of pollution and the most likely pollution sources, the community is able to target strategies to monitor and reduce those particular emissions, thus improving health and air quality in their community. Clean Water Fund is working with the local community and NGO partners on the effort, and the LCERP for Lost Hills should be completed by March of 2026.

Community Organizing in the ICE Age

Meaningful long-lasting change has always been based in grassroots community organizing. Yet the actions of the current federal administration seem like a deliberate tactic to reduce the ability of communities to speak for themselves.

Federal actions make establishing trust and conducting outreach difficult — but not impossible. Technology developed during the pandemic allows easier lines of communication and data sharing, while old school door-to-door in-person organizing by trusted messengers allows communities to push back against this wave of fear-mongering and misinformation. We will continue to support the right of community members to speak and act on behalf of their neighbors and families.

— Jesus Alonso, Kern Community Organizer

Groundwater Sustainability in Kern County

Since the 2014 passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), Clean Water Action has been tracking its implementation, both at the state level where we've reviewed over 100 plans, and at the local level in Kern County, where we have worked for over a decade.

We weren't surprised when the Department of Water Resources determined in 2023 that the Kern Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) was inadequate — we agreed! Under SGMA, once a basin is deemed inadequate, the State Water Resources Control Board (Board) takes over oversight and enforcement, which can include taking control of a basin and writing a new plan.

The Kern Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) rewrote their plan in 2024 to improve coordination, add monitoring wells, and establish a well mitigation fund for wells that go dry because of overpumping. On February 20th the Board held a hearing to determine whether to place the basin on probation.

A Community Panel with residents from Lost Hills, Shafter, and Buttonwillow was squeezed into the over 8-hour hearing. Through collaboration with Board staff, advocates were able to ensure remote testimony for community resident panelists, given concerns for their safety and privacy amid ongoing ICE activity in Kern County. In their testimony, community members expressed concern about being left out of the GSP development process.

After hours of testimony and deliberation, Board members approved a resolution giving the Basin

additional time to fix their GSP. In a victory for small, disadvantaged communities in the basin, Board members added language to their resolution requiring enhanced community outreach and engagement before the revised plan was released.

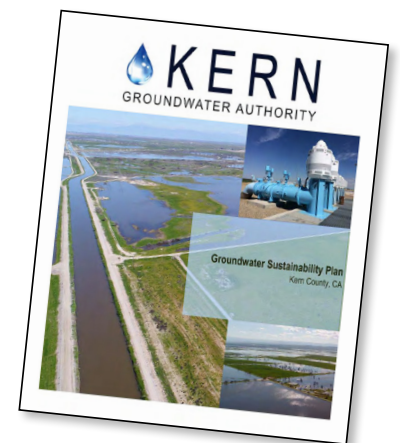
Throughout the spring, consultants engaged by the Kern County GSAs have conducted basin-wide community engagement and outreach. Outreach has included community events such as SGMA Pop-Ups, workshops, and focus groups, with varying levels of success. Community members were able to express concerns about water quality, the impact of the groundwater plans on water affordability, and concerns about the lack of transparency in the process, but many continued to be confused about the program even after being briefed at the Pop-Ups.

The revised plan was released on June 20, 2025 and will be considered by the Board on September 17. As we review the plan, we're hoping it answers the following questions:

- Did community engagement lead to any current or planned future changes to the GSP?
- How will community access to safe and affordable water be protected during plan implementation?
- How will community interests be integrated into the Plan moving forward?

Clean Water Action is eagerly reviewing the 925-page plan and its 13 Appendices, and look forward to sharing our findings!

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ReThink Disposable and SFE Collaborate to Bring Sustainable Foodware to Spanish-Speaking Daycares

Towards the end of 2024, the San Francisco Office of the Environment (SFE) reached out to our ReThink Disposable staff to see if we could help them to convert and source reusable foodware for their licensed, Spanish-speaking daycare facilities.

Our ReThink Senior Specialist worked closely with SFE and the preschool owners to switch away from plastic and single-use disposable products, which can contain toxic chemicals that leach into food and can negatively impact children's growth and development over time. The schools are also seeing monthly cost savings after the switch, allowing them to allocate more resources to support the families in their community.

We have converted 41 schools since we were first contacted by SFE, which represents 4% of all licensed childcare facilities in the city. It was inspiring to see the level of interest in the ReThink Disposable program and the overall enjoyment of the products by the preschool and daycare leaders — as well as the kids themselves. We're always happy to reduce single-use foodware wherever possible, but this work is most important when it impacts our youth. We hope to continue working with more childcare facilities in the future.



“Todo llegó y están muy lindos, pero sobre todo seguro de usar para los niños. Muchas gracias!”

“Everything arrived and they are very cute, but above all, safe to use for the kids. Thanks so much!”

— Karla, Cielito Lindo Spanish Learning Daycare



“Working with Spanish-speaking preschools and daycares in San Francisco has been such a joy! Many were eager to participate and grateful to receive reusable, non-plastic replacements of plastic and disposable foodware for their kids. These replacements will reduce kids' exposure to potentially harmful toxins during a critical developmental period, and save daycares money!”

— Madelyn Vital, California Senior Zero Waste Specialist, ReThink Disposable

Drastic Budget Cuts Would Put Clean Water at Risk

The Trump administration's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget proposal threatens to eliminate critical State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) under the Clean Water Act — putting public health, environmental protection, and local economies at serious risk. These grants fund essential state programs that monitor water quality, control pollution, issue permits, and support community-led restoration. Without this funding, many states report they would be forced to shut down core clean water operations, lay off staff, and abandon key projects that protect drinking water, prevent harmful algal blooms, and ensure safe rivers and lakes. Clean Water Action has urged Congress to reject this proposal and is partnering with fellow advocacy groups to educate lawmakers on its harmful consequences. Learn more about potential impacts of the White House budget proposal [here](#).

Clean Water Action has been monitoring the reconciliation Bill H.R. 1 (the “Big Beautiful Bill”), which would gut essential protections for our water and communities. This legislation slashes funding for coastal resilience, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) facilities, and environmental justice programs. These are vital investments that safeguard drinking water, protect vulnerable communities, and prepare for climate impacts. It strips away the regulatory tools needed to prevent pollution and hold polluters accountable. We need bold, equitable action to protect clean water, not rollbacks that put public health and our environment at risk.

Around Town: Source Water Collaborative Member Meeting

Source Water Collaborative's Co-Chairs Lynn Thorp (Clean Water Action) and Deirdre White (Association of State Drinking Water Administrators) welcomed attendees to the annual Source Water Collaborative Member Meeting on June 17. This hybrid gathering brought together 31 national organizations to give updates, exchange ideas, and advance the shared goal of protecting America's drinking water at the source.

Toxic Chemicals:

EPA Should Do More — Not Less — to Keep PFAS Chemicals Out of Our Water

In April 2024, Clean Water Action applauded EPA for finalizing drinking water limits for six of the notorious per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) chemicals. PFAS are widely used chemicals that are highly persistent in the environment, have been found in drinking water sources nationwide, and are known to cause serious health problems. Yet this May, EPA announced plans that it would reconsider these Safe Drinking Water Act limits for four PFAS chemicals and delay protections for two more. Clean Water Action [released a statement](#) opposing weakening these health-based drinking water limits and urging EPA to accelerate Clean Water Act pollution limits and other initiatives that would keep PFAS out of our water and the environment in the first place.

These are examples of why we must urge our representatives not to cut EPA's budget or weaken our environmental and health safeguards.

[**Take action today!**](#)

Celebrating \$1 million in micro-donations!



Clean Water Fund's long-running partnership with SurveyMonkey's Contribute program recently passed a major milestone: \$1 million donated to Clean Water Fund, and counting. One powerful demonstration of what we mean when we talk about “strength in numbers.”

You can help speed us on our way toward a second \$1 million. Just join the almost half-million others who have signed up to take surveys benefiting Clean Water Fund.

Learn more at
[**cleanwater.org/surveys**](https://cleanwater.org/surveys)

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